



U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
BUREAU FOR DEMOCRACY, CONFLICT, AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE (DCHA)
OFFICE OF U.S. FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE (OFDA)

GUYANA – Floods

Fact Sheet #2, Fiscal Year (FY) 2005

February 8, 2005

NUMBERS AT A GLANCE

SOURCE	
290,000 people affected	U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), February 8, 2005
5,600 people in shelters	Government of Guyana's Civil Defense Commission (GOG/CDC), February 7, 2005
32,000 people without access to assistance	OCHA, February 8, 2005
92,000 people with flooded homes	OCHA, February 8, 2005

Total USAID/OFDA Humanitarian Assistance to Guyana\$889,017

CURRENT SITUATION

USAID/OFDA staff in Guyana

- Between January 18 and February 1, USAID/OFDA staff, including two Regional Advisors, a USAID/OFDA Consultant, and a USAID/OFDA Communications Officer, deployed to Guyana to assess emergency needs and coordinate USG relief efforts. USAID/OFDA continues to monitor the humanitarian situation.

Humanitarian Update

- As of February 7, OCHA reported that the flooding had affected approximately 290,000 people, or nearly 40 percent Guyana's population, living in 113 villages in the northeastern administrative regions of West Demerara/Essequibo Islands, Demerara/Mahaica, and Mahaica/Berbice. Women comprise more than half of the affected population, while one-third of the affected are children under nine years of age.
- On February 8, OCHA reported that 92,000 residents have flooded homes, including many homes that are accessible only by boat. According to OCHA, the water level in some villages remains up to 1.5 meters high. In addition, poor drainage across the affected area is exacerbating the flooding, and water spillage and the possible collapse of the conservancy dam in the affected area remain concerns. On February 7, USAID/Guyana reported that the conservancy dam is holding and that the water level in the dam had receded five inches since February 4.
- USAID/Guyana reported on February 7 that the 27 temporary shelters managed by the GOG/CDC remain at capacity with approximately 5,600 residents. Most shelters are located in schools that were closed due to flooding. However, as schools become operational, residents of the shelters will need to relocate. On February 3, the Government of Guyana's Joint Operations Center (GOG/JOC) and the GOG/CDC announced plans to arrange for the relocation of residents to new sites.
- On February 7, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) warned that leptospirosis, a bacterial disease caused by exposure to contaminated water, is a health concern in flood-affected areas. According to USAID/Guyana, the Georgetown Public Hospital has admitted approximately 112 people with suspected cases of leptospirosis, including an estimated 12 people who have died from the disease. In addition, the dramatic rise in suspected cases of leptospirosis has resulted in overcrowding at the Georgetown Hospital, the only public hospital operating in flooded-affected areas. The Ministry of Health (MOH) continues to distribute prophylaxis at mobile clinics to patients exhibiting leptospirosis symptoms.
- As of February 3, the GOG/CDC assumed responsibility for disaster planning and coordination from the GOG/JOC. The GOG has also initiated plans to install community kitchens, educate the public on safe waste disposal practices, and organize boat service along eastern Demerara to transport and evacuate residents.
- To meet immediate relief and transition recovery needs for six months, the U.N. issued a consolidated appeal for more than \$2.9 million on February 8. Target areas include: access to food, potable water, and adequate sanitation; disease surveillance; waste disposal; community clean-up; health and education services; and livelihoods.
- On February 7, OCHA reported that dry weather is forecast through February 11. According to OCHA, the GOG estimates that removing floodwater will take between 10 and 14 days in most areas. In Mahaica Creek, however, GOG authorities predict that the floodwaters will not recede for two to three weeks.

USG ASSISTANCE

- On January 18, 2005, U.S. Ambassador to Guyana Roland W. Bullen declared a disaster due to the damage caused by the flooding. In response, USAID/OFDA provided \$50,000 to the GOG/CDC for the provision of emergency relief items, including temporary shelter materials, medical supplies, and food assistance, as well as for the initial clearing and repair of roads and drainage canals.

- On January 24, USAID/OFDA provided \$100,000 to the GOG/CDC for the local purchase and distribution of emergency relief supplies.
- On January 25, USAID/OFDA airlifted 10,000 ten-liter water containers and 10,000 hygiene kits, valued at approximately \$147,000, including transport.
- In addition, USAID/OFDA provided \$150,000 to support the PAHO appeal, now part of the U.N. consolidated appeal, for emergency health activities.
- On January 31, USAID/OFDA provided an additional \$50,000 to the GOG/CDC to support relief activities, including clean-up of flood-affected areas.
- On February 4, USAID/OFDA airlifted 10,000 cotton blankets and seven shallow water boats, valued at approximately \$170,000, including transportation.
- Beginning on February 8, components of a USAID/OFDA-funded high-capacity drainage and irrigation mobile water pump are being shipped to Guyana. The pump, valued at \$221,101, is designed to remove water from flooded areas.

USAID HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO GUYANA

Implementing Partner	Activity	Location	Amount
USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE¹			
GOG/CDC	Emergency relief supplies	Affected areas	\$50,000
GOG/CDC	Blankets and shallow bottom boats	Affected areas	\$96,094
	Transport		\$73,810
Guyana Red Cross	Hygiene kits and water containers	Affected areas	\$72,512
	Transport		\$74,500
PAHO/U.N.	Emergency health activities	Affected areas	\$150,000
GOG/CDC	Emergency relief supplies	Affected areas	\$100,000
GOG/CDC	Clean-up activities	Affected areas	\$50,000
GOG/CDC	High capacity drainage and irrigation water pump	Affected areas	\$222,101
TOTAL USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE TO GUYANA			\$889,017

¹USAID/OFDA funding represents committed and/or obligated amounts as of February 8, 2005.

PUBLIC DONATION INFORMATION

- The most effective way people can assist relief efforts is by making cash contributions to humanitarian organizations that are conducting relief operations.
- USAID encourages cash donations because they allow aid professionals to procure the exact items needed (often in the affected region); reduce the burden on scarce resources (such as transportation routes, staff time, warehouse space, etc); can be transferred very quickly and without transportation costs; support the economy of the disaster-stricken region; and ensure culturally, dietary, and environmentally appropriate assistance.
- Information on making effective donations can be found on the following websites:
 - USAID: www.usaid.gov, Keyword: Donations
 - The Center for International Disaster Information: www.cidi.org
 - InterAction: “Guide to Appropriate Giving” at www.interaction.org
- Information on choosing a charity to support can be found on the following websites:
 - Better Business Bureau: www.give.org
 - GuideStar (A National Database of Nonprofit Organizations): www.guidestar.org
 - The American Institute of Philanthropy: www.charitywatch.org
 - Charity Navigator: www.charitynavigator.org
- Information on relief activities of the humanitarian community can be found at www.re liefweb.int.